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DISAPPEARING DICKENSLAND.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

AMONG the vast number of queer businesses in which people somehow or other manage to pick up a decent livelihood in London there is one which is hardly known to Londoners themselves, and but little known even to visitors from other parts of England, but with which a great number of enthusiastic American travellers are pretty well acquainted. Indeed, it is not too much to say that it is almost entirely among the pilgrims to English literary shrines and the indefatigable and omnivorous general sightseers from the great Western Continent that the professors of this singular and deceptive industry find their prey.

For it must be owned at the outset that, although in the ordinary conduct of their lives these people are fairly honest, perhaps, as the world goes, there is something of a predatory nature in their public career, and that the flights of fancy in which their peculiar avocation compels them to indulge are occasionally—I might almost say generally—very near akin to downright mendacity. It may be pleaded in mitigation of this somewhat severe judgment that long intercourse and familiarity with works of fiction have developed among them more brilliant imaginations, a higher inventive faculty and keener eyes for the picturesque than are found in ordinary mortals; but the fact after all remains that more thorough-paced disciples of Ananias and Sapphira than the guides to what is called Dickensland in London it would be difficult to find in all that vast army of untrustworthy people who have taken the great sights and shrines of the world into their peculiar keeping.

As a matter of fact, the London of the early books of Charles Dickens is, practically, as Mrs. Curdle said of the drama, “gone, absolutely gone.” Very little even remains of most of the places described in the later works. Dickensland in London, indeed, has nowadays hardly any more real existence than the Garden of

the Hesperides or the Island of Atlantis. But what does that matter ? The transatlantic pilgrim to the shrine of the master clamors to be shown the house in which Mr. Pickwick lived, the court in which Mr. Krook made such a very uncomfortable end of it, the actual public-house which displayed Mr. Samuel Weller's extensive and peculiar knowledge of London in so remarkable a degree, the Old Curiosity Shop, Tom-all-alone's, the Wooden Midshipman and all the rest of it. Why should he not be gratified ? It is true that a great many places of this kind were absolutely incapable of certain identification at any time, and that almost all the originals of those which were actually portraits have been swept from the face of the earth in the course of the extraordinary changes which have practically given us in fifty years a new London on the ruins of the old. But the demand inevitably creates the supply. Old illusions die hard. Dickensland lives again in the vivid imagination of the guides, and the truth of the old saying again asserts itself—*populus vult decipi et decipitur*. A curious instance of the way in which people are sometimes quite unconsciously and innocently led into error in these matters is to be found in John Forster's *Life of Charles Dickens*. Mr. Forster gives a picture of Tavistock House, which is, no doubt, accepted as a faithful representation of the house as it was when Charles Dickens lived in it. But, as a matter of fact, it is not. A later tenant added a portico, or porch, to the street door ; and this portico, of which Charles Dickens knew nothing, figures in the picture. This is, perhaps, a trivial matter ; but many of the Dickensland traditions have received credence on very similar, and equally inaccurate, grounds. Thus, for instance, to take a case outside London, local tradition at the little seaside village of Broadstairs in Kent has given the name Bleak House to the house on the cliff above the harbor, in which Charles Dickens lived during two or three summers, and which, in his time, was known as Fort House ; and the legend—implicitly believed in those parts—is that *Bleak House* was written there. In point of fact, although much of Charles Dickens's work was done at Broadstairs—notably, as regards *David Copperfield*—it so happens that *Bleak House* was one of the books on which no work whatever was done in Fort House.

That there is really little or nothing left of what may fairly be called Dickensland in the London of to-day, a rapid survey of a

few of the books which afford the guides their most popular and remunerative examples will amply prove.

The *Sketches*—to begin with the beginning—were written some fifty-seven years ago, and it is natural that the scenes described, and the manners and customs of the actors in them, should have changed considerably in so long a period. But how the whole thing has been actually swept away is nothing less than astonishing.

“A few years hence,” Charles Dickens wrote in the description of Scotland Yard, “and the antiquary of another generation, looking into some mouldy record of the strife and passion that agitated the world in these times, may glance his eye over the pages we have just filled ; and not all his knowledge of the history of the past, not all his black-letter lore, or his skill in book collecting, not all the dry studies of a long life, or the dusty volumes that have cost him a fortune may help him to the whereabouts either of Scotland Yard or of any of the landmarks we have mentioned in describing it.” This prediction has been amply and speedily verified. Scotland Yard still exists, it is true, but the street of handsome buildings which leads from Whitehall to Northumberland Avenue has nothing but the name in common with the old world “territory, which was first accidentally discovered by a country gentleman who lost his way in the Strand,” and the “landmarks” have fared as badly. Northumberland House has gone altogether, and its site is occupied by the Grand Hotel and the northern end of Northumberland Avenue ; the new market, the springing up of which at Hungerford is described as having first given the signal of change in Scotland Yard, itself made way for Charing Cross Railway Station in 1862 ; the Hungerford Suspension Bridge, which was not constructed until nine years after the date of the *Sketches*, was transported to Clifton near Bristol, at the same time. Absolutely no trace of the old place remains.

Following the *Sketches* in order, we find Seven Dials still existing, little altered in their main features but still considerably improved ; but the famous old clothes shops of Monmouth Street have gone the way of most of the frowsy slums of a like nature. Except as to the entrance from St. Paul’s Churchyard and what is called Dean’s Court, where some of the old buildings have been preserved, the same fate has attended Doctors Com-

mons, the courts, so familiar to us through *David Copperfield*, were destroyed in 1867; the successors of Mr. Spenlow and the "coves in white aprons," to whom the elder Mr. Weller fell so easy a prey, have vanished together into space. There is still a theatre on the site of Astley's, but it is not the same as that in which Christopher Nubbles and his family and friends made such delightful holiday—nor, it may be incidentally mentioned, would it be possible for any gentleman in Kit's position to give that remarkable oyster supper nowadays for the simple reason that the price of oysters in London has increased in direct proportion to the increase of London itself.

Londoners get so many holidays in these days—and use them so much better than was too often the case in the old time—that they no longer require "a periodical breaking out. . . . A sort of spring rash; a three days' fever which cools the blood for six months afterwards, and at the expiration of which London is restored to its old habits of plodding industry as suddenly and completely as if nothing had ever happened to disturb them," to quote the *Sketches*' description of Greenwich Fair, and it is perhaps fortunate that this should be so, for Greenwich Fair was abolished as a crying nuisance many years ago. A more permanent, and, in its way, more respectable form of outdoor recreation, practically vanished when the public got tired of Vauxhall—celebrated by Thackeray both in *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*—and the "Royal Property," as it was called, was parcelled out into building-lots, and when its sometime rival, Cremorne, which, oddly enough, is not mentioned by Charles Dickens, was also swallowed up by the advance of the enterprising London builder in the course of the sixties. The ill-contrived, ill-arranged, ill-constructed criminal courts at the Old Bailey still remain, as crying a disgrace to the greatest and wealthiest city in the world as ever. The prison of Newgate is not yet pulled down, but is practically disused and is to disappear into the limbo of London memories before very long, and, though it is still used as a place of execution, the miserable business is now done privately instead of in the presence of the horrible crowd which used to fill the open space before the frowning walls on "hanging Mondays" in the bad old time. The Samuel Wilkins of to-day could not take Miss Jemima Evans to the "Eagle," for that place of amusement—afterwards, in the hands of John Rouse, and, later, of the two Conquests, father and son, famous

as the "Grecian theatre"—has passed into the hands of the Salvation Army, and its concerts nowadays are provided only by the singularly inharmonious brazen instruments and flabby big drums in which the followers of General Booth appear to take so weird a delight, while the dancing platform in the garden, if it is used at all, must needs be utilized exclusively for the corybantic exercises of tambourine-pointing Hallelujah Lasses and Happy Elizas. As for the "White Conduit," where Miss Amelia Martin realized all the bitterness of ill-considered and disappointed ambition, its place knew it no more, and its site in Pentonville was built over, years ago.

It will be noticed that almost every place of amusement mentioned in the *Sketches* has disappeared entirely, and even a casual observer cannot fail to see that the amusements of the great mass of the London people have at the same time changed altogether. The Vauxhalls and Cremornes have gone, and, even if they had survived for a few years longer, would inevitably have been suppressed by the wisdom of our municipal rulers, who have decided that public dancing-places shall be tabooed, and would like, if they could, to refuse any refreshment but tea and lemonade to the visitors to the Crystal Palaces and Earl's Courts which have taken the place of the old pleasure resorts. To some extent the change may be and, I suppose, must be admitted to be for the better, but that the people of that day enjoyed themselves in simpler fashion than we do, and were content with a great deal less in the way of amusement—and spent very much less money in the process—than is demanded now must be patent to any reader of the *Sketches*. The monstrous growth of London and the enormously increased facilities for moving about, which have of late years been provided by railways, omnibuses, and trams, have made it almost impossible for the modern Londoner to take his pleasure, such as it is, except in droves and mobs, and I doubt very much whether our people really get half as much enjoyment for their money as their simpler-minded and more easy-going ancestors got out of their cheaper and far less frequent holidays and diversions.

The troubles of the Pickwickian explorer of Dickensland in London begin very early in his career, and the aspect of Goswell Street, now known as Goswell Road, which will meet him on the very threshold, is calculated to inflict upon him a severe shock to

his feelings. It is difficult to imagine how a gentleman of means, such as Mr. Pickwick is described to have been, could ever have taken up his abode in this noisy, bustling, and, if the truth must be told, decidedly unpleasant thoroughfare, or how Sergeant Buzfuz, even in the loftiest and most poetical flights of his eloquence, could ever have associated it with anything in the nature of tranquillity and retirement. And, even bearing in mind the fact that Mrs. Bardell's establishment was of a very modest kind, it would certainly require the boldest and most determined of guides to pitch upon any house in the Goswell Road as that from which Mr. Pickwick emerged on the memorable "thirteenth of May, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven." But the look of the thing changes when it is remembered that at that time Islington, which lies at the northern extremity of the Goswell Road, was a pleasant, outlying village ; that the fields and lanes of Pentonville, Stoke Newington, Highbury, Hornsey, and Highgate were within an easy walk of Mr. Pickwick's lodging, and that the miles and miles of streets which now separate the Goswell Road from the open country were not even thought of.

Possibly, as our traveller drives disappointed to the Golden Cross, he will wonder how ever Mr. Pickwick managed to have that instructive conversation with the cabman, which would under present arrangements be quite impossible, until he remembers that in those days the cabman sat on a kind of perch just outside the cab and handy for conversation with the fare, and recognizes, as he probably will, the infinite superiority of the modern hansom over the ancient "cabriolet," while it will afford him food for reflection to consider that the prototype of the crowd of omnibuses through which he threads his way did not make its appearance in the streets of London until the 4th of July, 1829—just about the time, indeed, that Mr. Pickwick had completed the sowing of his rather late crop of wild oats and had settled down at Dulwich.

As to the Golden Cross, that is only represented to-day by a comparatively modern hotel opposite Charing Cross station. The old Golden Cross was cleared away in 1829 or 1830 to make room for the present Trafalgar Square, which has itself been transmogrified in the course of time to such an extent that anybody who has to revisit it now after an absence of five and twenty years or so would scarcely recognize the place but for the Nelson Column, the National Gallery, and St. Martin's Church.

Up to about six years ago there was still enough left of the old White Hart Inn in the Borough to swear by, for, although the buildings on the south side of the yard had been replaced by an exceedingly modern public-house, some of the old galleries and tiled roofs on the north and east still looked down forlornly on the pilgrim. Now there is not even that much consolation left. The whole place has been swept away, and is as unrecognizable as the “Belle Sauvage” on Ludgate Hill, the Pickwickian associations with which were long ago dissipated by the erection of a great printing office on the site of the house at which Mr. Weller, Senior, stopped “ven he drove up,” and which has only left its name as a puzzle to antiquaries. But if the White Hart is gone, a few doors farther to the southward there yet lingers a considerable portion of one of those typical old taverns, “The George” by name, and any one who wishes to know just what the extinct White Hart was like would do well to pay a visit to this quaint old hostelry. The yard has been annexed by a railway company as a depot for the receipt of goods, but all that part of the house which lies to the south is in admirable preservation, and “The George,” although not the rose itself, is at all events nearly next door to it.

The dry arches of Waterloo Bridge, which were so highly eulogized by Mr. Samuel Weller as a “fine sleeping place—within ten minutes walk of all the public offices—only if there is an objection to it it is that the situation is rayther too airy,” still exist, it is true, but as they were utilized for warehouses, stables, and so on shortly after Mr. Weller’s time they do not now offer any points of interest to the explorer, and the “Fox-under-the-Hill” tavern in the immediate neighborhood—where Mr. Roker’s friend Teddy Martin “whopped the coalheaver”—was disestablished by the Victoria Embankment, and the last traces of it have been swept away by the vast alterations now going on between the Strand and the Embankment at the foot of Cecil and Salisbury streets.

It is of no use for the Dickens student to allow his guide to take him into the city in search of Messrs. Dodson & Fogg’s offices in Freeman’s Court,—they were pulled down four and thirty years ago: and I should very much doubt his succeeding in the discovery of that “second court on the right hand side—last house on the same side of the vay,” the close acquaintance with which, extending even to an intimate familiarity with the

peculiarities of the “box as stands in the first fire-place,” stamped Mr. Weller’s knowledge of London as being extensive and peculiar. It was about six or seven and thirty years ago that I first began my quest after that box in the first fire-place, and as I have never been able to come across it I presume it must have been improved off the face of the earth very soon after Mr. Weller’s time.

There is a George Yard off Lombard Street to this day, but it is a very different George Yard to that in which the George and Vulture was situated—Mr. Pickwick surely had odd tastes in the way of lodging—and the site of the hotel is now occupied by a part of the City Conservative Club, all that remains of the old place being its name on the door post of an adjoining chop house. The Blue Boar in Leadenhall Market, where they were so well acquainted with the elder Mr. Weller’s ways, fared as badly when the narrow congeries of ramshackle lanes and alleys, which until quite recently contained the old market, were wiped out by the fine buildings of the present one. Hard by, the little timber midshipman—“that which might be called, familiarly, the woodenest, that which thrust itself out above the pavement, right leg foremost, with a suavity the least endurable, and had the shoe buckles and flapped waistcoat the least reconcilable to human reason, and bore at its right eye the most offensively disproportionate piece of machinery”—no longer stands “taking observations of the hackney coaches” from the side of Sol Gills’s door in Leadenhall Street; and the street itself and all the buildings in it are changed beyond recognition. There is no room any more in Bevis Marks for Mr. Sampson Brass’s residence, the parlor window of which was so close upon the footway that the passenger who took the wall brushed the dim glass with his coat sleeve. Bevis Marks is now a fairly broad street of warehouses and other well-to-do places of business, and one would as soon expect to see a giraffe in “The Marks” as a *Punch and Judy* show. Further to the southward again people walk about in Todgers’s neighborhood—or what would be Todgers’s neighborhood if Todgers’s still existed—as easily as they walk about anywhere else. It is no longer the fate of the pedestrian in this quarter to “grop[e] his way for an hour through lanes and by-ways, and court-yards and passages,” and never once to emerge “upon anything that might be reasonably called a street.” Lanes and by-ways, court-yards and pas-

sages, all the “devious mazes” of the district have been carted away, and nothing remains but the monument, now the centre of quite a respectable open space, to remind us that M. Todgers once kept house and wrestled with the commercial gentlemen’s appetite for gravy close by; while it is enough to give one look only at Cannon Street to feel that it is no longer the place for the “somewhat similar” establishment to which Mr. Jinkins took occasion to refer after a certain memorable dinner at which Todgers’s showed what it could do when it tried.

A very happy hunting-ground for the sojourner in Dickens-land in London used to be the unsavory neighborhood “in the vicinity of Clare Market and closely approximating to the back of New Inn,” wherein was situated the Magpie and Stump Tavern, in which Mr. Lowton entertained Mr. Pickwick in so singular a manner, and I take it that more impossible guesses and audacious taradiddles have been gravely offered to the unsuspecting traveller in this particular portion of Dickensland than in any other. For not only did the shabby, dirty, noisome courts and alleys of which these particular slums were composed—and almost all of which have been quite recently pulled down—answer to many of Charles Dickens’s descriptions of low neighborhoods; not only were there here many taverns which might well have stood for the “Magpie and Stump”—I think, indeed, that the “weather-beaten sign-board” bearing “the half obliterated semblance of a magpie intently eyeing a crooked streak of brown paint which the neighbors had been taught from infancy to consider as the stump” really was still in existence up to a comparatively recent date; but just round the corner, as it were, where Portsmouth Street joins Lincoln’s Inn Fields, is the choicest and most generally believed in of all the bogus Dickens sights. This is a mean little building, now used as a waste-paper store, which describes itself as the veritable Old Curiosity Shop “immortalized by Charles Dickens,” and which has about as much to do with the genuine building—if Nell’s home had any actual brick and mortar original—as the Capitol in Washington itself. Curiosity shops were not such rarities in 1840 that it was important to take any particular specimen as a model to begin with, but let anybody recall the descriptions of the Old Curiosity Shop itself in the earlier chapters of the book, carefully consider Cattermole’s illustrations, and then take stock of that claimant to the

title which is now under consideration, and I think he will have as little hesitation in arriving at the conclusion that the Portsmouth Street building is a complete fraud as I have myself. There is a description of a "small, dull yard" below the old man's window, for one thing, which puts the whole matter beyond doubt, seeing that the very few windows in the house in Portsmouth Street look direct into the roadway; while the statement in the book that the "back parlour was very far removed from the old man's chamber," and the consideration of the circumstances that there were in the Curiosity Shop of the book two rooms on the ground floor besides the shop, and that in the Portsmouth Street house there could not be any possibility of finding room for a tenth part of the grandfather's stock-in-trade, seem to knock the final nails into the coffin of Portsmouth Street. And if any further evidence is considered necessary it will be found, I think, in the description of the deserted house as "a dull barrier dividing the glaring lights and bustle of the streets into two long lines." There are not many glaring lights and not much bustle in Portsmouth Street, and if there were, they could not, by any stretch of the imagination, make "two long lines."

Not very far off, across Lincoln's Inn Fields and New Square, Lincoln's Inn, is an undoubtedly genuine bit of Dickensland, however; not long to remain it may be feared, as a great deal of pulling down and rebuilding are going on in the neighborhood, but well worth looking at while it lasts. This is the court in which Mr. Krook lived. It can be approached either by the little gate about midway in the east side of New Square, through which Miss Flite conducted "The Wards in Jarndye," or by a passage adjoining the Three Tuns public-house in Chancery Lane, just opposite Bream's Buildings. It is known to ordinary mortals as Chichester Rents, and at the Lincoln's Inn end of it stands the Old Ship Tavern, which, I have no doubt whatever, was the original of the Sol's Arms. A careful and interesting article in the *St. James's Gazette* of June 27, 1892, claims the corner house opposite (Nos. 8 and 9) as Mr. Krook's, and relies for evidence especially on the fact that no other house in the court has an attic with an outside parapet—"Lady Jane," the Lord Chancellor's cat crouched "on the parapet outside for hours and hours" seeking to devour Miss Flite's birds, it will be remembered. But against that is to be set in

strict fairness the fact that we have it in Mr. Krook's own words that the Sol's Arms was "next door," while the coroner in the course of the inquest on Mr. Krook himself speaks of the "unlucky house next door;" and we are therefore compelled to conclude that "over the way" and "next door" were interchangeable terms both with Mr. Krook and the coroner, or to admit that it is absurd in considering such matters as this to insist on an absolute photographic accuracy in matters of detail. It is enough—or ought to be enough, of course it is not enough for the genuine enthusiast—that a place should bear sufficient resemblance to a description in one of the books to enable us to say with tolerable certainty, this is the scene which suggested so and so to the writer. To insist upon every brick, or on the absolute identification of every detail; to suppose that Charles Dickens held himself down in such cases to mere literal description, bringing to it no imagination or invention of his own, is manifestly absurd. And it seems to me that a judgment based on these considerations will be in favor of Chichester Rents, just as it will not admit the claims of the Old Curiosity Shop in Portsmouth Street. Chichester Rents has a rival claimant, by the bye, in Bishop's Court, a little to the northward. But what little remains—and it is not much—of the old houses in Bishop's Court only seems to point to the greater authenticity of "The Rents."

The particular *Bleak House* scenes associated with this neighborhood, it may be added, are very easily to be identified. There is no difficulty in recognizing Took's Court, Cursitor Street, as Mr. Snagsby's Cook's Court, for instance, and as yet the march of improvement has left there many houses, any one of which may well be that over which the "little woman" ruled with so iron a rod. The Courts of Chancery have been cleared away and their business has been transferred to the great legal palace in the Strand—that triumph of ill-arrangement and inconvenience which might almost be the work of the Court of Chancery itself—but the original of Mr. Tulkinghorn's chambers would not be hard to find somewhere about No. 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields; while farther west, half-way down Russell Court, which leads from Drury Lane to Catherine Street, are the "reeking little tunnel of a court," the steps which Jo swept so carefully and so cleanly because "he was so very good to me, he was," and the "beastly scrap of ground" in which they buried Captain Haw-

don. There is no offence about the little tunnel of a court now, the burying-ground has been asphalted over and is a playground for children, but that the little churchyard out of Russell Court was that which Charles Dickens had in his mind when he selected a last resting-place for poor "Nemo" cannot, I think, reasonably be doubted. As for Tom-all-Alone's, better supervision, sanitary and police—and especially the passing of Lord Shaftesbury's Common Lodging-Houses Act in 1851—have cut Tom's claws and generally trimmed him up a good deal, but there are still many courts and alleys between Catherine Street and Lincoln's Inn Fields which would be unsafe enough in the daytime, and absolutely dangerous at night, for well-dressed people, not being doctors, nurses, sisters of charity, or scripture readers. Across Holborn, to the northward, Kingsgate Street still lingers precariously. Before long, no doubt, it will take the prevailing infection from the broad, new street at its northern end and burst out into that peculiar modern red brick which, like a sort of scarlet-building-fever, has seized upon so much of the neighborhood, but a fairly lively imagination can still make out Mrs. Gamp's first floor, which was so "easily assailable at night by pebbles, walking-sticks, and fragments of tobacco pipe"—although the modern successor of Mr. Sweedlepipe calls his shop a hairdressing saloon, and appears to have no connection in the bird line.

But I have wandered from the party at the Magpie and Stump and from Jack Bamber, whose stories about the old inns dealt with places of which Charles Dickens was very fond, and which are described in many of his books. Several of these will well repay a visit from the careful and enthusiastic Dickens student, for those which still survive have changed but little in the last fifty years. The Temple has been altered a great deal, it is true, but Fountain Court has been left pretty much as it was when it served as a place of meeting for Tom Pinch and Ruth, and many other of the Dickens scenes which are laid in the Temple can still be easily identified in the course of a stroll among the old buildings which still remain. Furniss's Inn is still very much as it was when John Westlock had that charming little dinner party there; a memorial tablet marks the house in which Charles Dickens wrote the greater part of *Pickwick*; there has been little or no change in Gray's Inn, since Traddles took the "dear-

est girl in the world " there after their marriage ; Staple Inn and Barnard's Inn—the latter the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner as a club for tom-cats—still real memories of Mr. Grewgious, Neville Landless, and Mr. Tartar, Pip, Herbert Pocket and Joe Gargery ; while Clifford's Inn remains the dreariest of all the "shabby crew," as Charles Dickens called them. The extensive opening up which has been effected by the construction of Holborn Circus and the new streets in its vicinity has brought Thaives Inn out of its native obscurity ; the archway through which Mr. Guppy conducted Esther Summerson to Mr. Jellyby's house has been removed, and the Inn is now one of the turnings out of the broad Circus itself. But it is still easily recognizable in bad weather as "a narrow street of high houses, like an oblong cistern to hold the fog," and has a curiously old-fashioned air among its brand new modern surroundings. Indeed, few of the localities in Dickensland in London answer more satisfactorily to the description than Thaives Inn. But a little way across the Circus are the splendid markets of Smithfield on the site of that disgraceful old cattle-market which seemed to Pip "all a-smear with filth, and fat, and blood, and foam," and which presented so desolate an appearance to Oliver Twist when he started on that terrible journey to Chertsey with Mr. Sikes. All the *Oliver Twist* district about here, it may be added, has disappeared as completely as Jacob's Island itself, not even a Holborn Hill or a Snow Hill—now connected by the Viaduct—remaining to serve as landmarks. Clement's Inn is being pulled down ; New Inn is threatened with a like fate ; the Globe and the Opera Comique Theatres occupy the site of Lyon's Inn ; the place of Symond's Inn, where Mr. Vholes had his office, and where Richard Carstone lived after the Court of Chancery had cast its evil spell over him, knows it no more.

The Marshalsea Prison, which figured so conspicuously in one of Jack Bamber's stories, which reappeared still more prominently in *Little Dorrit*, and to the recollection of which the many sad incidents of Charles Dickens's boyhood give so much painful interest, has altogether gone. Some of its ruins were still standing in 1856, but no trace of it is now to be found, although local tradition—unaccompanied by any sort of proof—has it that some portions of the old prison still exist among the houses to the northward of St. George's Church, in the Borough High Street.

The Fleet prison was also pulled down long ago, and its site on the east side of the south end of Farringdon Street built over. With the debtors' prisons, and imprisonment for debt itself, have gone all the sponging houses about Cursitor Street—the Coavinses and others—and that mysterious institution known as the “Rules of the Bench,” the memory of which has been preserved for us in “*Nicholas Nickleby*.”

But it is not only individual houses belonging to Dickens-land which have been lost to us in process of time. Whole neighborhoods have changed their nature; new and handsome quarters of the town have arisen, not only since the days of Mr. Pickwick, but since the death, only twenty-two years ago, of his creator himself. Trafalgar Square, as we have seen, dates only from about the close of Mr. Pickwick's career; the great work of the Victoria Embankment was not completed until 1870; the Northumberland Avenue change was of later date still. The Royal Exchange and the open space about it did not exist before 1844. The widening of the Poultry and Newgate street, the construction of the Holborn Viaduct, and the clearing away of Middle Row, Holborn, have made a fine thoroughfare which Mr. Pickwick would be quite unable to recognize as that along which he walked with Sam Weller from George Yard to Gray's Inn. Farringdon Street, Ludgate Circus, St. Bride Street, and New Bridge Street have completely changed all that neighborhood. The city has been absolutely transformed by the opening up of fine new streets in every direction. Shaftesbury Avenue, Theobald's Road, Rosebery Avenue, Victoria Street, the great market of Smithfield, and many other new streets and open spaces have made havoc of the networks of slums, the narrow thoroughfares and the intricate mazes of houses which people in the old days seemed to regard with perfect complacency. The Houses of Parliament, the Courts of Justice, and almost all of the theatres have been built, and half the parks of London have been made—not to mention the extension of the railway system—not only since Mr. Pickwick's time, but even in quite recent years.

It is needless to multiply instances. It is enough to recognize the fact that the greater part of the London of fifty years ago has vanished already, and that the requirements of a vastly increased and more exacting population demand still further and more sweeping changes. We shall be fortunate if we can even save

some of the great monuments of architectural art which were bequeathed to us by our forefathers ; but as to Dickensland in London, that in the course of a very few years will exist only in the books themselves and in the notes of explorers and commentators.

CHARLES DICKENS.